

WHAT'S THE RIGHT TEST FOR YOUR VEHICLE?

On-Board Diagnostics (OBD) Test

1996 or newer model year vehicles weighing less than 8,501 pounds and equipped with a computer controlled engine and fuel system

Instead of testing your vehicle's exhaust, your emissions test will involve scanning your vehicle's computer for emission control malfunctions. During an on-board diagnostics scan, a lane inspector will connect to your vehicle's computer through a connector under the dashboard to determine the presence of recorded "trouble codes" that illuminate the "check engine" light on the instrument panel. Vehicles with an illuminated "check engine" light automatically fail the emissions test.

Treadmill Test (IM240)

**1984 to 1995 model year vehicles weighing less than 10,000 pounds and
1996 or newer model year vehicles weighing between 8,501 and 9,999 pounds**

Your vehicle will be driven on a treadmill while the exhaust is collected and analyzed. The treadmill test is simple and safe, and usually takes less than four minutes to complete. The vehicle's emissions are measured under a range of operating conditions including acceleration, deceleration, cruising and idle.

Idle Test

**1977 to 1983 model year vehicles
Vehicles with a carbureted fuel system
Trucks weighing 10,000 pounds or more regardless of model year**

Your vehicle's emissions will be analyzed while the engine is at idle. The idle test is more appropriate for older model cars because of their vehicle design.

Gas Cap Leak Check

All vehicles that are required to have an emissions test are required to have a gas cap leak check.

Because a cap can look OK but still leak gas vapors, we check all gas caps of vehicles presented for emissions testing in Maryland. The gas cap leak check is the first step in the emissions test, and involves placing the cap on a testing adapter and pressurizing it with air to ensure that it seals tightly.



STAY ON SCHEDULE

Regularly scheduled vehicle maintenance is the best way to help your vehicle pass its emissions inspection. In addition to promoting a healthy environment, a well maintained vehicle runs more efficiently, is safer to drive, and will last longer.

Whether you drive a sports car, pick-up, or minivan, the following tips will help you to maintain your vehicle properly and prepare for the emissions test.

TYPICAL VEHICLE MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

For optimum driveability, efficiency, and engine performance, follow your vehicle manufacturer's recommended service schedule. Some regularly scheduled service items include:

- Changing your engine oil and oil filter.
- Rotating your tires and checking tire pressure. Examining tires for tread life, uneven wearing, and cupping. If your tire tread is worn unevenly or your vehicle pulls to one side while driving, it is probably time for a wheel alignment.
- Inspecting engine cooling system, hoses, and clamps.
- Replacing air filter, changing automatic transaxle fluid, and inspecting front and rear brakes. Brakes should be replaced sooner if you experience unusual noises or longer stopping distances.
- Replacing spark plugs and PCV valve. A misfiring spark plug can reduce fuel efficiency by as much as 30 percent.

SELECTING THE RIGHT SERVICE SHOP

Consider having your emissions-related service completed at a Certified Emissions Repair Facility (CERF). A CERF is an automotive repair facility that has specialized diagnostic equipment and participates in a voluntary certification program operated by the Maryland Department of the Environment. A list of voluntary participants is available from the Motor Vehicle Administration Representative in the VEIP office or the internet at www.mde.state.md.us/arma/veip/cerf.pdf.

Look for signs of excellence in customer service: membership in the Better Business Bureau, AAA-Approved Auto Repair status, and customer service awards and letters of commendation.

Look for evidence of highly trained repair technicians such as trade school diplomas and ASE certification.

For more information about motor vehicles and air pollution, please check the Maryland Department of the Environment's web site at

www.mde.state.md.us

